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ABSTRACT

A sequence of action-oriented games and initiatives is provided in this guide for group therapy leaders who wish to employ activities to promote trust, problem solving, and cohesion among group members. Introductory material discusses the objectives of action-oriented therapy, the adaptation of traditionally outdoor activities to indoor settings, and the balance of activity time to processing time. Following the introduction, a history of adventure activities for groups is presented in outline form, highlighting the distinctive features of Outward Bound, New Games Foundation, Playfair, and Project Adventure--organizations that have pioneered in adventure education, creative play, and experiential learning. The third section gives directions for six warm-up games, six games for pairs, and seven activities for group problem solving. Following the activities are ten tips for leaders of processing/debriefing sessions. These include asking the group to evaluate the activity, discussing how group members felt as they were participating, and relating games and initiatives to issues facing the group. A seven-step approach to creative problem solving gives directions for brainstorming, identifying and evaluating alternative problem solutions, and developing a sequential plan for implementing a solution. A bibliography of 16 references is included. (JHZ)

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AN ACTIVE ADVENTURE FOR GROUPS

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Action-oriented therapy involves using games and initiatives as a primary treatment modality. Many of these programs employ a series of group activities, initiatives or exercises designed to a) generate information for subsequent process/discussion session, b) serve as projective tests of participants" behavior, c) offer a "unreal" opportunity to deal with "real" feelings, d) promote a childlike playfulness in which openess to change is greater, and e) create a "safe" and trusting atmosphere for clients to try out new behaviors (Crocker & Wroblewski, 1975).

Many of the programs mentioned in the literature employ games and initiatives associated with encounter groups or use board games, such as monopoly and chess, to engage participants in competetive play. The adventure-based program noted typically uses games and initiatives in the outdoors as its primary activities. Most of these activities, initiatives, and games are of a cooperative nature and promote trust, problem solving, and cohesion among group members. The games used in group counseling sessions come from Fluegelman (1976, 1981), Rohnke (1977, 1979), and Weinstein & Goodman (1980), numerous workshops conducted by Project Adventure, Inc., and five years personal experience as a summer camp counselor. Though traditionally done outdoors, many action-oriented group, dyad, and triad games are adaptable to the indoor standard group room, (12' X 20') and appropriate for use in group counseling sessions.

Most of these games can easily be adapted to group counseling sessions with little or no training. Several of the activities are potentially dangerous if the counselor does not prepare the group tc watch out for each other and to "spot" and activity where persons are lifted off the ground. The reader is referred to the resources for more information about safety.

The games are presented in sequence. The sequence of activities is as important as knowing when to sit down and process. Moving from warm-ups to introduction games, and then to dyad and group games require deeper levels of commitment. This is the preferred method of presentation: increasing risk and commitment incrementally. Pausing after each activity for group process is not advocated because the flow can be lost so easily. Many of the activites provide natural stopping points upon completion. Usually several different activities can be linked together to provide an opportunity for group process. When using the activities in an ongoing group (especially with adolescents), it is best to use more activities than process in the initial sessions, moving more towards a balance of activity and process as the group sessions progress.

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I. AN ACTION-ORIENTED APPROACH:

- May be adjunctive to an insight approach: i.e. as play therapy
- Can be used as an exploratory tool:initial assessment
- Can be primarily non-verbal: can help get past "smoke screen" of words.
- As assessment, activities can reveal behavior patterns, ways of relating and problem solving techniques
- Can be used as therapy or recreation
- Tend, by definition, to be ACTIVE and involve everyone.
- Can allow for the levels of risk among members which are conducive for trust to develop.
- Allows for focusing on what was done, not why a person chose to do a behavior.
- Typically builds on successes through sequencing of activities
- Provides a number of opportunities where natural consequences are present- good chances to deal with failure
- Comes in a variety of forms: art, dance, puppetry, writing, music, and adventure.

II. HISTORY OF ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES FOR GROUPS

Outward Bound (OB)-

a. Beginning in Aberdovey Wales in 1941; inspired by Kurt Hahn's belief that exposure to self discipline, teamwork, adventure, physical hardship and risk might provide participants with the opportunity to "discover themselves, experience success and defeat, forget themselves in the pursuit of a common cause, train the imagination and develop the ability to participate and plan." (Kesselheim, 1976, p.30).

b. Present day world wide recognition and status as a leader in adventure education and an inspirer of offshoot programs: NOLS, Project Adventure, Wolfcreek Wilderness to mention a few.

c. OB is seen as a catalyst for physical challenge, stress experiences, problem solving, skills training, self actualization, reflection, evaluation, and service. (Medrick, 1975; NCOBS, 1982).

d. Five elements of the OB approach are:

1. personal development: extending self awareness to identify personal limits; clarifying needs and goals; helping to recognize role in society and responsibility to self and others.

2. interpersonal effectiveness: expanding capacity to respond to others; encourage open and effective communication; cooperative relationships; ecome involved and committed;

3. environmental awareness: enhance understanding and responsibility for nature.

4. experiential learning: create an attitude with emphasis on experimentation and participation.

5. philosophy and values: provide and opportunity to test, refine, stimulate and refine values and beliefs.

(Medrick, 1975; NCOBS, 1982 p.8-9)

New Games Foundation

a. Beginning with "soft" WW IV at San Francisco State College in 1966 under the direction of Whole Earth Catalog's Stewart Brand and George Leonard's (Ultimate Athlete, 1975) concept of creative play. Culminating with presentation at the Esalen Sports Center in 1973 and the first New Games Tournament in October, 1973 (under the direction of Pat Farrington). Leonard maintained that "how we play the game may turn out to be ...nothing less than our way of being in the world." (Fluegelman, 1976, p10.)

d. The New Games Foundation was official in 1974 in San Francisco; NGF has combined the elements of Brand's soft war with Leonards's creative play and interpersonal trust to expose the masses to a type of fun where the rules are PLAY HARD, PLAY FAIR, NOBODY HURT".

c. Many know the NGF for their workshops, trainings, community games tournaments, earth balls, boffers, and the lap game.

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Offshoot (of sorts): Playfair

1. Created by Matt Weinstein and Pamela Kekich; Advocates an "audience participation comedy show using noncompetitive games to create a high spirited feeling of community" (Weinstein & Goodman, 1980 p. 235)).

2. Working primarily with adults in colleges, universities and business conventions; Attempts to cross entertainment with a positively focused personal growth experience. The programs last around 2 hours and involve 100 or 1000 people. (Weinstein & Goldman, 1980)

Project Adventure

a. Founded in 1971 in Hamilton, Mass; challenged with bringing adventure into the public school; Staff included former OB instructors and administrators; Became a Demonstrator/Developer for the US Office of Education's National Diffusion Network; Has developed alternative P.E. curricula and experiential academic curricula.

b. Known throughout the US for ropes courses and initiative games, primarily through workshops and equipment sales (including Karl Rohnke's (1977) Cowstails and Cobras and (1984) Silver Bullets.

c. Elements of an adventure curriculum: (a) Sense of adventure, unpredictability, drama and suspense. (b) High level of expectation (c) Success orientation (d) Atmosphere of mutual support, cooperation, and encouragement. (e) Enjoyment, fun, and the ability to laugh at self and others. (f) A group problem solving approach to learning. (g) A combination of active involvement with personal/group reflection and evaluation; always open to the teachable moments.

9. Organization and structure that defines the limits of experience and states expectations within which there is freedom to make decisions, choices, and even mistakes.

10. A program that is neither too long, too exotic, or too expensive. (Rohnke, 1979-, Bag of Tricks, 13, p.117-118)

IV. ADVENTURE ACTIVITIES

WARM-UPS

MOON BALL: Take a beach ball, throw it into the group and see how many times the group can hit it without anyone hitting it twice in a row. Try for a record: 10, 25, 50, even a 100 times in a row. Set a world's record! PROPS

TOSS-A-NAME-GAME: Standing in a group of 8-15, pass a tennis ball/bean bag/rubber chicken (etc.) around and have everyone say his or her name clearly and distinctly. Next, pass the ball to the person beside you and call their name (this goes around the circle). Then, call a name across the circle, wait for a visual response and toss the object to the person you called. After the first ball has been going a few times, add a ball; then another, and another, until you have three to five balls going at once.

WAMPUM: In a group of 5-12, place one member in the center so that all members are within reach of the rolled up newspaper which the center person is holding. The object of the game is for the center person to hit ("wamp") a circle person before they can call another circle person's name. If the circle person calls a name of someone not present or calls the name of the center person, they become "it." Someone in the circle starts the game by calling another circle person's name. The center person attempts to "wamp" the called person before they can call another name. PROPS

COUNT OFF: Have the group try to count to 10 (or 15 or however many persons are in the group) out loud so that no one says a number at the same time. When a number is spoken simultaneously, start over.

LINE UP: Have the group line up by birth date, distance from home, colors of pants, number of years of education, etc.

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EVERYBODY UP: Starting in pairs, two people put feet together while sitting face to face. Holding hands, have the pair stand up so that both bottoms come of the floor at the same time. Next try four up, then eight or the whole group

PAIRS

SIT-DOWN. Pairs grab hands, put feet together and sit down so that buttocks touch the floor at the same time.

STAND-UP After stretching, have the pair try to stand up together. Remember, buttocks must come off the floor at the same time and feet must stay in contact.

ROW-BOAT STRETCH Once the pair is sitting down, hold hands, put feet (stretched out) together and SLOWLY AND GENTLY push and pull each other to get a nice and easy back stretch.

MIRROR: Pairs, standing about two feet apart, one partner starts moving hands, arms, face, etc. while the other partner follows; then switch.

BACK TO BACK DANCING: Yes, this is easier to see than describe. Pairs stand back to back with arms locked. The music starts and the dancin' begins. Pairs dance around and 'bump' with other pairs, shoulder(s) to shoulder(s). Then the two pairs of inside shoulders release, with each partner rolling around and ending up back to back with the new partner. The dancin' and switching continues....

TOE-TAPPING: Boots and heels are taken off for this game!! Pairs face each other. The object is to try and tap (lightly touch) the partner's toes with your toe. If you do, score one. Try for three out of five. NO STOMPING!

GROUP PROBLEM-SOLVING ACTIVITIES

TANGLE (KNOTS): The group (5-8 members) forms a tight circle (shoulder to shoulder) and each member puts forth their right hand, grabbing another's right hand. Left hands are then outstretched to grab another person's left hand. The object is to untangle without breaking a hand clasp. If the group has gotten frustrated after what looks to be an unsuccessful attempt, allow them to break one handclasp.

PYRAMID: Ask the group to form a symmetrical pyramid. Watch out for possible falls from persons achieving a height of four feet or more! See if they can walk forward in the pyramid.

FUNNY FACE: Standing in a circle (5-10 people), the object is to make everyone else laugh, except yourself. On the count of go, try to make the others laugh without closing your eyes or touching the other people. If you slip, or show the slightest smile, you lose. Step out of the circle and watch all the SiLLiNeSs.

FOUR POINTER: In groups of seven, have each group arrange themselves so that they have only four points of contact with the ground (floor). Each hand or foot counts as a point of contact. The object is to walk 25-30 feet once this arrangement has been achieved. WATCH FOR POSSIBLE FALLS. SPOTTING IS NECESSARY.

LOW ELECTRIC FENCE: Tie a piece of rope between two chairs where the legs meet the seat, both at the from and back of the chair. The object is for the group to pass under the electric fence without touching the fence, chairs, or floor directly under the fence. If anyone touches, the group has to begin again or whomever is touching the "zapped" member must return and start again. PROPS

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ALL ABOARD (TEAM ON A T-SHIRT): Using a two foot square or a T-shirt, have the group stand on the object for five seconds without touching the floor or carpet around it. Make the activity challenging but temper with compassion. A two foot square can support up to 15 people! SPOTTING IS CRITICAL! WATCH FOR FALLS. YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE! PROPS

TRADIN' PLACES (TP Shuffle): Using a 2'X 6" X 12' board, a curb, or an equal distance space taped to the floor, have the group line up along the object so that half the group faces the other half. Ask the group to try and trade places without falling off. If a member falls off, either start over or count the number of mishaps and add a penalty to the total time it took to successfully complete the activity. PROPS

V. PROCESS AND EVALUATION

A. Presentation
1. Sequencing: building on success!!!!!
2. Perceived Risk/Actual Risk = Adventure

B. Tips and topics for presenting/debriefing
Traditional presenting/debriefing

1. Sitting in a circle is not necessary or sufficient for a good group session, but is sure does help!

2. Ask the group what they did; whether they enjoyed it; why, why not.

3. Open ended questions work best: How , Where, When, and What are godd starters to avoid yes/no answers.

4. Ask how the problem/initiative was solved.

5. Talk about who led the group; who followed; did the group offer support?

6. Try and elicit how participants felt as they were participating. Give members a chance to thak each other for catching them/spotting/supporting etc.

7. Additional areas to cover: competition, efficiency, negativism/positivism, group support, peer pressure, teamwork, cooperation, and fear/joy.

8. Try and find ways to relate the initiatives to other issues which might be going on in the group/family. For example, the game mentioned above "Tradin' places" is useful in describing a parent-child interaction with issues of power and control.

9. Summarize, or better yet, have a group member summarize the activity or series of activities before stopping.

10. Process is not necessary after each activity, and several process times can take place in a session. The ratio will vary depending on how long your group has been together. It seems best to end the last process of the session with a short, upbeat game! (Rohnke, 1979- BOT p. 181 which includes comments by Chris Roland and Paul Schempp; plus some thoughts by this author)

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CREATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING
Developed by E. Paul Torrance, Ph.D. (1979)
University of Georgia

STEP 1: BRAINSTORM AREA OF INTEREST OR PROBLEM

From all you have participated in and discussed today, pick out several concepts that are particularily interesting tc you or that you would like to work on today. List your top three interest areas below and begin to look for others who share your interest. When you get together, brainstorm several problems, or interests you would like to explore further. The rules of brainstorming should be remembered: no judging or explaining; hitchhike on other's ideas; Write down every idea. Write down several of the problems or questions you would like to work on below.

STEP 2: RESTATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM FOR CREATIVE ATTACK

Once you have found a partner or partners (or even if your decide to do the exercise alone), restate your problem or question in a form for attack. You might begin with "In what ways might...? or "How might.....? or something like this. Your problem should be stated as clearly and specifically as possible so you can brainstorm "on target" solutions. Write the revised problem or question below.

Step 3: ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

Brainstorm alternative solutions to the problem stated above. All partners should record ideas and no idea is to be judged (yet). WRITE DOWN EVERYTHING!!!! THINK SOLUTIONS (not more problems)

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STEP 4: CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

No doubt you have produced more alternative solutions than you need. Your problem now is to select your best alternatives and make them better. List three to five criteria which you think are important in evaluating your solutions. Examples of criteria are time, money, energy, etc. Choose criteria that will differentiate your alternatives.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

_____

STEP 5: EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES

List several of your most promising alternatives and evaluate them according to each of your criteria listed above. Rank each of your alternatives from 1 (lowest) to as many alternatives as you have (highest). For example, if TIME was your first criteria, and you wrote down six possible solutions to your problem, then below under #1 (for TIME) you would rate the solution that used time best, "6"; then the next best TIME solution would be rated "5", and so forth until you reach "1". Rate the rest of your solutions under each criteria. When you finished rating, add all your ratings horizontally to find the highest rated alternative.

ALTERNATIVES	CRITERIA					TOTAL
	1	2	3	4	5	

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STEP 6: WRITE DOWN YOUR BEST SOLUTION BELOW. HOW MIGHT YOU MAKE IT BETTER?

_____

_____

_____

_____

STEP 7: OFTEN OVERLOOKED, THIS IS THE MOST IMPORTANT STEP! WRITE DOWN THE FIRST THING YOU NEED TO DO IN ORDER TO IMPLEMENT YOUR SOLUTION. BE SPECIFIC! WHAT MUST YOU DO FIRST, SECOND, THIRD, ETC...

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

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